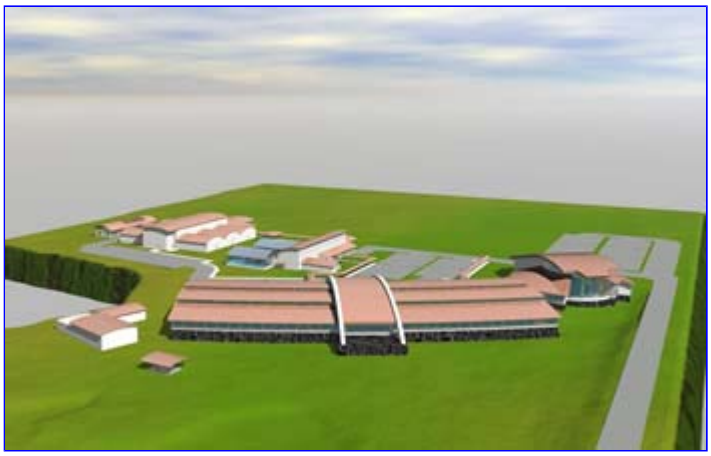
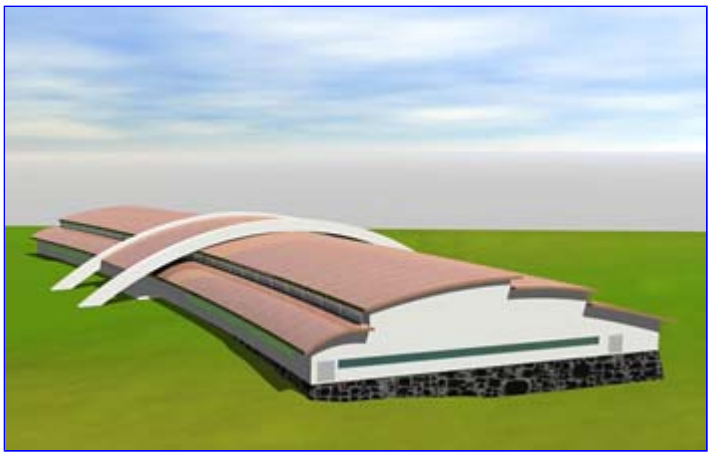
USDA ARS Agricultural Research Service
the in-house research arm of the U.S. Department of Agriculture



Artist's rendering: ARS' new Hilo research center will include a centralized laboratory building (foreground) and administration building (right), as well as greenhouses and an insectary (behind lab building). *Click for a larger version.*



Plans call for construction of a major portion of the laboratory building to begin in December 2004. *Click for a larger version.*

Virtual tour video:
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Researchers Working To Diversify Hawaii's Agriculture

By Marcia Wood
September 1, 2004

Hawaii's agricultural producers might have a much broader array of crops from which to choose in the future, thanks to a state-of-the-art research complex now in the works for the U.S. Pacific Basin Agricultural Research Center at Hilo, on Hawaii Island. The center is operated by the Agricultural Research Service, the chief scientific research agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The center already has labs in Hilo's Panaewa forest and at other sites on the islands of Oahu and Kauai.

The new $60-million complex will be built on a 33-acre parcel within the University of Hawaii at Hilo's science and technology park, about four miles from downtown Hilo.

A groundbreaking ceremony for the complex took place this morning.

The first phase of construction, in which a major portion of a 60,000-square-foot, centralized laboratory will be built, is scheduled to begin in December 2004. The center will also have greenhouses, an insect-rearing facility and an administration building.

In addition to focusing on diversification of the crops that Hawaii's growers can produce, researchers at the center work on enhancing the demand for Hawaii-grown crops in U.S. and international markets. These tropical food and floral crops include papaya, mango,

macadamia nuts, gardenias and orchids.

To achieve these goals, the center's scientists develop new, affordable, environmentally friendly approaches, known as integrated pest management systems, for controlling insect and disease enemies of these and other crop plants.

In addition, the ARS experts are providing new information about the genetic makeup of crops such as papaya, rambutan and pineapple, and are safeguarding a living collection of the plants' rare, wild relatives from around the globe.

The Honolulu architectural firm of Richard Matsunaga and Associates designed the new research center.

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